

Council Work Session
December 13, 2010
8:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor M. Jane Seeman
Councilwoman Laurie Geneviro Cole
Councilman Daniel M. Dellinger
Councilwoman Laurie DiRocco
Councilwoman Edythe Frankel Kelleher
Councilman Michael J. Polychrones
Councilman Howard J. Springsteen

Also present: John H. Schoeberlein, Town Manager
Robert Carlisle, Chief of Police
John Barker, Animal Control Officer
Steven D. Briglia, Town Attorney
Melanie Clark, Town Clerk
Kirstyn Barr, Public Information Officer
Craig Griffin, Information Technology Administrator
Gregory M. Hembree, AICP, Director of Planning and Zoning
Linnea Fechter, Senior Planner
Carol S. Waters, Deputy Town Clerk

(1) Town Hall HVAC Replacement

Mr. Bill Luck, senior mechanical engineer of Wiley|Wilson, discussed heating, ventilation, and air conditioning options for the Town Hall building. Points from the discussion are grouped by subject matter as much as possible, and presented below.

Maintenance is perhaps the most important factor in extending the life of a boiler. Ours has had regular maintenance and could last a number of additional years. However, there are boilers that are a lot more efficient than the one we have now and eventually we may want to replace it.

The chiller and the cooling tower are more likely to need replacement sooner. The life expectancy of a chiller is about 20 years.

The existing heating system is continuing to perform well. It could easily be integrated into a new system that would improve some of the current problems, like the two day delay in switching from heating to cooling and the humidity in the building.

There are a myriad of different options. If Council isn't comfortable with the heat pump type system, we could go back to maintaining the existing central plan with a chiller and a boiler, and a VAV (Variable Air Volume) system that's not VAV everywhere, and maybe maintain some fan coil units in certain areas where there is not enough ceiling space, or

something along those lines. It would not make the whole operation much more complicated or difficult to maintain.

We could also maintain the boiler and all the piping and put in new baseboard heating or something like that if we are concerned that the heat pump needs supplemental heating.

A four pipe system could be utilized in different ways. We only have a two pipe system now. Buying a four pipe system would eliminate the two day delay when switching back and forth from heating to cooling. Also, the four pipe system could be integrated in with a fan coil system. That is a very easy thing to do. That would be a lower cost replacement than the VAV system. Actually, the four pipe system with fan coil units would be the cheapest option.

Either the VAV or the four pipe system with new fan coil units could completely control every office separately.

We could do a VAV (Variable Air Volume) system with fan coil units in the basement, but we would need a separate air handling unit in the basement to deliver outside air to all the spaces. The pricing could possibly come down with this option, compared to what was already approved for this project.

We would still have to introduce fresh air separately with a Daikin system (Daikin is one of the manufacturers of the VRF [Variable Refrigerant Flow] systems). The VRF, or Daikin, is a heat pump system. Heat pumps are becoming more favorable for domestic water heating. The Daikin system is very efficient with cooling. With the condensing units, no matter what the size of the compressor you only need a little bit of cooling; it won't run the compressor as much; it would burn less energy when cooling was needed. Neither a cooling tower nor a chiller would be needed if we had a heat pump system (VRF). The Daikin life expectancy is twenty years. The VRF, or Daikin, system is the one which would group six or more offices together, to agree on whether they wanted heat or cooling.

The heat pump system (VRF) would be an all electric system, as opposed to the VAV system, which would be natural gas. Bill Luck thinks monthly energy costs would be very close for VRF or VAV. As volatile as the prices of gas and electricity can be, it is difficult to know which one would be cheaper.

Installation time differences of different systems are not a significant consideration.

We may not want to leap into an entirely new system of heat pumps and abandon everything we have until we are as sure as possible that it would result in a real improvement. Heat pumps would make it much more unsightly around the building, they have their own maintenance issues, they have a life span of about 20 years, and they would eventually require replacement, too. Some Council members have personal experience with how cold buildings can be with heat pumps, for example on Mondays when you need to wear your coat inside. Heat pumps are better than they used to be, but some people are concerned that they may not provide warmth when the weather is below about 30 degrees Fahrenheit.

There is still the issue of getting ventilation air in all the spaces; you would still have to put in an air handling system to provide ventilation and pressurize the building a little bit to keep air from infiltrating in. Bill Luck is not sure where we would put an air handling system. It should be more accessible than the one that's in that room now. One of the biggest issues that we have now is the poor air circulation in the building as a whole. Good air circulation can dry the building out when it gets humid. Maintaining the pressurization in the building is also important. When you pressurize the building a little bit, you're not having air pulled in through exterior windows and doors. This issue is sort of an aside to the type of system you get, because the air circulation could be sort of handled separately anyway.

The humidity entering Town Hall is largely from the old system that we have now. The outside air comes into the building through the small vents behind the existing units. These old units have dampers on the back side that are supposed to open and close. With age, the valves tend to stick. Good air flow through the valves is prevented if they are stuck closed. If they stick open, you'll always have outside air coming in, in all types of weather.

A centralized air handling unit can dry out and condition the outside air before delivering it to each space inside. This could be done with any new HVAC system.

John Schoeberlein and Dennis Johnson prefer to have just one system, to reduce maintenance costs. Mr. Schoeberlein observed that we have more of a cooling load throughout the year.

Recommendation: Council will talk to the Deacon who was in charge of VRF system installation at Pope Paul VI to see what he thinks of their VRF system, and physically seeing a working VRF system.

(2) Vienna Cable TV/Video Streaming/ AV setup for Council Room

Craig Griffin presented the idea of doing "Cable TV Light," meaning that the Town would have its own cable channel, but not have a studio or hire extra personnel to run it. The channel would only be available to people who subscribe to Cox or Verizon Cable TV. Vienna could also have live video streaming of the Town Council Meetings on line for people who don't have Cox or Verizon Cable TV. Mr. Griffin mentioned that in Herndon's Cable TV broadcasting experience, they found that customers with lower quality broadband at home experienced jittery, poor displays of the video streaming. There is no additional cost to the Town for utilizing Cox or Verizon for their cable channel.

We collect PEG (Public Education in Government) fees on every Cable TV bill that can be used to enable a station. At this time, about \$376,000 is available in the PEG fund balance. Ray Milograno, President of R.A.M. Production Service, Inc. drew up a proposal that would cost \$264,000. It includes basic cable channel equipment, online video streaming, and audio visual setup needed to produce quality programming. His proposal was based on list prices, so there could be some variance in the figures.

Usage of the PEG (Public Education in Government) funds is very limited. The Town may not use the funds to upgrade its website.

To start with, Kirstyn Barr would be running the cameras for the Council meetings. Once the program is more established, we could do a volunteer/intern program to support our cable TV channel without hiring any additional personnel, at least not initially. There are plenty of Audio Visual Broadcasting students from George Mason University and other universities who would like to intern and use professional equipment.

Ms. Barr could get a Bulletin Board up and running early to feed to the cable TV customers. The Bulletin Board basically just posts information, similar to a Power Point presentation with pictures and music. It could also be used as another avenue for Emergency Notification. As the Public Information Officer, Ms. Barr would be the one to maintain it. Mr. Milograno explained that the Bulletin Board in his proposal could have multiple quadrants of information going on at the same time, and people like the Police Chief could have a higher level of access for posting information. Mr. Milograno says it is a good system with good equipment. The Town would definitely have to go out for competitive bidding before purchasing this equipment.

The video quality on the security cameras currently in the Council Chambers is not satisfactory for Cable TV use. The new cameras and monitors could be installed in the Council Chambers when the HVAC makeover is done. (The monitors will be helpful for people doing presentations to Council.) Once the cameras and so forth are installed and the volunteer/intern program is running, Kirstyn would like to utilize the volunteers and some of the current staff to do actual programming. For example, the Police Department might put out some sort of safety information. The Town could also show video of Community Center activities or seminars, the Halloween Parade, the Fourth of July Fireworks Display, or programming from another network.

Recommendation: After the specifications have been written up, the Town Manager will write up a Council Meeting Agenda item to put on a future Council Meeting.

(3) Deer Control in Vienna

Chief Carlisle came in and introduced the Town Animal Control Officer, John Barker. Deer in the Town of Vienna have caused property damage, numerous citizen complaints, and some vehicle accidents. Numerous deer have been seen around Northside Park, parts of Westbriar, Ragland Road Park, and Nottaway Park.

Just outside the Town of Vienna around Clarks Crossing, Fairfax County has conducted two sharpshooter hunts to reduce the deer population; on November 11th, twenty-three deer were killed, and on December 6th, nineteen deer were killed. The animals are butchered and the meat is distributed to charities. Another hunt is planned for January. This will make a better and more appreciable difference than anything the Town can do.

The State of Virginia allows controlled bow and arrow hunting on private property, even on small parcels of land. However, the Town Code prohibits archery hunts within the Town limits. If the Town wanted to arrange any deer hunting, the Town Ordinances would have to be changed. The Department of Game and Inland Fisheries established a model ordinance that says if the Town is interested in changing these ordinances, it would have to adopt the model ordinance prior to May 1 in the year which the ordinance is to take effect.

Recommendation: Ask the Department of Public Works if they see less deer in Northside Park. Wait for the count from Fairfax County's January deer hunt.

(4) Enforcement of Sidewalk Snow Removal Ordinances in Northern Virginia

Consideration of this topic is continued from the Council Work Session of September 20, 2010, when Council requested comparison information on regulations and enforcement in surrounding jurisdictions. Per Steve Briglia, there is very little analysis on the snow clearing issue in Virginia. There is a General Code section on abating nuisances that mentions snow, but it is inconclusive. Some jurisdictions have addressed the problem under the general authority to abate nuisances, in which case there would be stronger legal ground in the commercial zone. From the perspective of the general nuisance provision, in the commercial sector where people are inviting prospective business customers to their properties, they are inviting them to the nuisance. So, there is greater legal support for requiring business owners to clear the sidewalks.

The amount of snow is not specified in regulations of other local jurisdictions. Falls Church declares that snow or ice should be cleared within 12 hours of the time that it stops accumulating. Falls Church had the most summons issued.

Cathy Salgado called a number of other local jurisdictions to inquire about enforcement methods and the department responsible for enforcement. The responsible department seems to be a matter of preference among the jurisdictions, but it is typically either the Zoning Department or the Police Department. One jurisdiction assigns the Town Manager's office the responsibility for enforcement. Leesburg was not satisfied with the enforcement of their snow clearing regulations last year, and is having meetings in an attempt to make improvements.

Enforcement in other jurisdictions is complaint driven; they don't take action unless there has been a complaint. In Loudoun County, the Zoning Department goes out and puts a notice on the violator's door. Then they photograph the notice on the door in case someone says they didn't get it. In previous cases where our Department of Parks and Recreation has issued notices to cut-back vegetation, they have found that once someone gets a written notice, they normally take care of the problem without any further action.

The question of enforcement and penalties for violation is not always addressed in the written ordinances of other jurisdictions. Some of them make it a civil penalty, and some make it a Class 3 or Class 4 Misdemeanor, for which there are fines. The property owner of a commercial establishment is the appropriate party to be cited for violation.

Most jurisdictions regulate both commercial and residential zones for clearing snow. Our Town Attorney recommends regulating the issue by zone. Churches are in commercial zones. Any changes made to the Town ordinances will have to be drafted and advertised.

Last week Kirstyn Barr sent 84 letters, signed by John Schoeberlein, to the commercial property owners along Maple Avenue to notify them that they need to clear their sidewalks and not block handicapped spots or entrances when it snows. (Or hire someone to do it.) The Town is responsible for clearing around the bus-stops. Cathy Salgado remarked that the commercial properties in Town have become accustomed to the Town clearing their sidewalks. Councilman Springsteen commented that the Town should not have to clear sidewalks for the commercial property owners. However, he would be hard pressed to require residential folks to clean their sidewalks.

During the snow clearing operations last year, Ms. Salgado found two different contractors on Maple Avenue blocking sidewalks with piles of snow shortly after her department had cleared them. That is a Class 1 Misdemeanor, enforceable by the Vienna Police. At times, Steve Briglia has had to send out notices when the commercial properties clear their parking lots and pile it up on the sidewalks.

The extremely heavy snows of last winter were very unusual. It made it practically impossible to shovel all of the sidewalks, so common sense judgment may be required at times.

Recommendation: Mr. Briglia will draft changes and refer the proposed ordinances to the Town/Business Liaison Committee for discussion and recommendation.

(5) Art in Public Places

Councilwoman Kelleher was appointed to represent the Town on the Fairfax County Economic Advisory Commission (EAC). One of the presentations to that commission was by the Fairfax County Council for the Arts. They demonstrated the positive impact of the non-profit arts and cultural organizations on promoting economic growth in Fairfax County. Designing new development with public art in mind helps the development to be more successful. It generates more private revenue and more public revenue.

As the Town is going through the process of formulating additional zoning controls for the Maple Avenue Corridor, looking at guidelines for architectural requirements and design criteria, this might be a good time to incorporate some encouragement for the arts. We could start thinking about objectives and policy statements. Art could be in the form of architectural façades, forms, or textures, fountains and water features, or other nature features. The Town already enjoys murals on private property, on the Whole Foods Building and near the Caboose. There are also the performing arts, like musical performances on the Town Green.

Incentives for the arts could be integrated into the Maple Avenue Corridor Vision Plan in terms of adding architectural interest, providing interior spaces for display purposes, providing exterior artwork for the community to enjoy, or things of that nature.

Other communities build an art component into their comprehensive plans. Our Planning Commission will be reviewing our Comprehensive Plan, in which the arts element has not yet been given much attention. Councilwoman DiRocco said that she thinks it would be worthwhile to add this consideration before updating the Comprehensive Plan. John Schoeberlein advised looking at this topic separately to get a better feeling of what we want to do and how we want to proceed on this. If it is just added as another step in the Vision or Comprehensive Plan review process, it might get lost.

Recommendation: Refer this to the Planning Commission and the Board of Architectural Review.

(6) Discussion re: Redistricting of Fairfax County Supervisor Districts

It would be worthwhile to make some suggestions that the Town is more focused and oriented towards Tysons and the Vienna Metro. Those two areas will always affect us more than any areas further west, so maybe we would be better off in a district with them.

We are now in the Hunter Mill District, but it is too large and needs to lose thirty or forty thousand people. The last time re-districting was done, ten years ago, the Hunter Mill District tried to cut out Vienna, and now they have an even stronger position to do that. In 2001, the only district in the County that did not change at all was Providence. Currently, the Providence District does not need to expand; they are “right-sized.”

It is key to keep all Vienna citizens together in the same district. Perhaps we should also try to change the precinct boundaries to get all of Vienna into the same precinct.

Fairfax County needs to move quickly after the first of the year. The Town needs to be proactive and let it be known that we are much more closely aligned with Tysons than we are with Reston.

Recommendation: The Mayor will write a letter.

The Town Council Work Session Meeting of December 13, 2010 adjourned at approximately 10:15 p.m.